D.—DANGERS OF THE FISHERIES.

49. DANGERS TO THE VESSELS.

The characteristics of the fishing schooner and its management will be discussed hereafter. We shall here consider the dangers to which these vessels and their crews are exposed.

The dangers to which these vessels are liable may be considered under nine heads: (*a*) Dangers on the fishing grounds; (*b*) dangers encountered while making passages to and from the grounds; (*c*) dangers in approaching and leaving the shore; (*d*) dangers from collision; (*e*) dangers of the harbor; (*f*) dangers from ice; (*g*) dangers from fire or lightning; (*h*) dangers from attacks of marine animals; (*i*) and dangers from defects in the construction of the vessel itself.

DANGERS ON THE FISHING GROUNDS.

DANGERS OF THE COD FISHERY ON GEORGE'S BANK.—Judging from the record of disasters, the George's fishery is probably the most dangerous one in the world. On this ground over one hundred Gloucester vessels are constantly employed, winter and summer. In summer a few New London vessels resort there, principally for halibut, and it is also visited by a fleet of mackerel catchers. The peculiar dangers of this fishery are encountered chiefly in the winter. It is the custom for the vessels in winter to anchor close to one another upon some portion of the Banks. The favorite locality is in the immediate vicinity and to the eastward of extensive shoals, on which there is from 2 to 12 fathoms of water, and where the waves break in rough weather. There are few instances where vessels which have been lost in this locality have left any record of the nature of the disaster which befell them. There is therefore doubt as to how most of the losses have occurred, but the theory is generally accepted that the vessels drifted into shallow water and foundered. There have been a few cases in which vessels have righted with loss of masts after being rolled over by the waves, and the crews have survived to tell the tale. Most of the losses have been during heavy easterly gales, when the vessels may have been forced into shallow water. The proximity in which the vessels are anchored greatly enhances the danger to which they are exposed, for if one of them goes adrift it may become necessary for many of those to leeward to cut their cables and also go adrift. Sometimes nearly the whole fleet has been thus set adrift at once. Of course, if they can retain their hold upon the bottom they are in comparatively little danger.

The theory is held by many fishermen that loss is often occasioned by a drifting vessel coming into collision with one at anchor, an accident which is most surely attended with fatal results to both. There is only once instance on record where a vessel thus drifting into contact with another escaped destruction, and in this case the vessel which she struck immediately sunk. This theory receives strong support from the fact that there have been so many hundreds of narrow escapes from collision between vessels thus drifting about. In the columns of the Cape Ann Advertiser and in the Gloucester "Fisherman's Memorial and Record Book" may be found recorded numerous instances of this kind. These gales are generally accompanied by dense snow and often also by with extreme cold which renders it quite impossible for the men to look to windward and to see a drifting vessel in time to cut the cable and escape collision. It is the common custom for the entire crews at such times to remain on deck, prepared for any emergency, and if it is possible

to see the drifting vessel in time they may succeed in getting clear. Since there is no insurance on cables, there is great reluctance to cut them as long as there is a possible chance of escape from collision in any other way. Then, too, the men feel that if they can hold fast to their anchorage they are safer than they would be if adrift and running the risk of going on the shoals or colliding with other vessels. For these reasons they often refrain from cutting the cables until it is too late, in hopes that the drifting vessel will clear them. Numerous instances are told of cables having been cut only when the approaching vessel was on the top of a wave and the one at anchor was in the hollow of the sea directly under it. At such times a moment's delay would be fatal. There are doubtless many instances of careless negligence in failing to keep a proper watch and in not having the appliances at hand for cutting the cable. Very often the ropes are stiffened with ice and the sails so heavy with snow that it is impossible to raise them in time to avoid disaster, even though there may be time to cut the cable. Perhaps, however, the principal cause of disaster is the reckless daring of the fishermen, who persist in remaining at anchor in close proximity to other vessels even when they see the gale is coming, and, by removing their anchorage a short distance, they might greatly lessen the risks of disaster. They are led to remain in the same position, and to take resulting risks, both from the fear of losing an opportunity of securing a fare of fish, and from a dislike to the appearance of timidity. In spite of all the dangers, and the fact that so many vessels of the George's fleet are yearly wrecked, there are many skippers in the service who have never sustained even a serious loss of property. An old Gloucester skipper told us that for 24 years he had fished on George's and had never lost even a cable. He attributed his good fortune to the fact that in the pleasantest weather he never "turned in" at night without seeing that everything on deck was ready for the most unexpected emergency. The skippers who can boast such a record as this are men usually renowned for prudence, skill, and intelligence. In many instances the greatest care is rendered ineffectual by the recklessness of others.

DANGERS ENCOUNTERED BY THE BANK FLEETS.—Vessels fishing on Le Have Bank, the Grand Bank, and other banks of this region, are exposed to dangers scarcely less to be dreaded than those which have just been described. On account of the greater depth of the water the likelihood of foundering upon the shoals is less, except in the vicinity of Virgin Rocks and Sable Island. The vessels do not congregate in fleets to such an extent as upon George's, and the peril from collision is therefore less imminent. Although, when the number of vessels engaged is taken into account, the losses in the Bank fishery have not been so numerous as on George's, still there have been several seasons when the losses have been large, as in December, 1876, when twelve sail and one hundred men were lost on Le Have, the Western Bank, and Banquereau; and again in the fall of 1879, when the loss was little less severe. Another element of danger from collision is met with in the Bank fisheries, for in the summer and fall the fishing fleet is located directly in the track of the ocean steamers plying from Europe to the United States. There are few, if any, recorded instances of the destruction of vessels in this manner, but losses have occurred in summer when the weather was pleasant and when the only plausible theory to account for their loss was that they had been run down by passing steamers.

Vessels of the Gloucester halibut fleet are accustomed to lie at anchor in winter in water from 100 to 200 fathoms deep, and are consequently much more likely to go adrift than the George's men, which are anchored in water varying in depth from 25 to 35 fathoms. When once adrift, they are obliged to "lie to" in heavy weather, and are exposed to much greater danger than when at anchor. The greatest danger to the drifting vessel is its liability to drift into shallow water and to bring up suddenly by the anchor taking a fresh hold upon the bottom. This often causes them to ship heavy seas or to be knocked down—that is, to be turned over flat on their sides so

that the masts touch the water. The schooner David A. Story, in December, 1880, got adrift in this manner, and one of her crew reports that in his opinion the anchor caught, and that she shipped a sea which knocked her down, causing her cable to part. Fortunately none of her crew were lost, but the man on watch had his leg broken, the vessel's deck was swept, her foresail split to pieces, fore boom and gaff broken, and 400 fathoms of cable lost. A similar accident occurred to the schooner Andrew Leighton, of Gloucester, December 10, 1876. While adrift she was knocked down by a sea so that, according to the statement of her crew, her mast-heads lay in the water. Fortunately, however, she righted, and ultimately succeeded in reaching home in safety. This vessel was lost in October, 1879, and it may be met her fate in this manner.

Vessels lying at anchor on the Grand Bank under riding-sail alone are sometimes knocked over by tornadoes. An instance of this kind occurred on the 29th of August, 1876, when the schooner Walter F. Falt, of Gloucester, was blown over. The crew was lost, and the vessel was afterward seen floating upon her side. In the fall of 1875 the schooner Epes Tarr, of Gloucester, anchored on the eastern part of the Grand Bank, was knocked down and dismasted.

The frequent loss of the rudders of fishing vessels, while at anchor on the Banks, is another danger to which they are liable. Many instances of this kind have occurred. In most cases the fishermen have succeeded in rigging a temporary steering apparatus, by which they have been enabled to reach the home port in safety. Some vessels have been lost through the rudder-braces getting loose, and the consequent wrenching of the rudder-head starting a leak which caused the abandonment of the vessel. An instance of this kind occurred on the Grand Bank in the spring of 1879, when the schooner Edwin C. Dolliver, of Gloucester, sprung a leak and sunk. Her crew was taken off and brought home by the schooner Thresher, of the same port. In addition to the danger of being knocked over, there is that of shipping a sea while at anchor, which is sometimes attended with serious results, both to the vessels and the men.

Heavy seas are so often shipped that numerous instances might be cited, but one or two will suffice. In the early part of 1877 the schooner John S. Presson, of Gloucester, while riding out a heavy northwest gale on the western part of the Grand Bank, shipped a sea which swept her decks and injured her about the stern to such an extent that, after the gale abated, she was obliged to put into Halifax for repairs. In January, 1879, the schooner Howard, while at anchor in the deep water on the southern edge of Le Have Ridges, shipped a heavy sea which swept her decks, smashing several of the dories and starting the house on deck, causing her to leak considerably.

DANGERS TO WHALING VESSELS.—Whaling vessels are not exposed to so great danger as the merchant vessels passing over the same portions of the ocean. The whalers, while on the cruising grounds, are under short sail and keep a careful lookout, especially at night, when, if there be anything unusual or unexpected, demanding speedy work, all hands can be called, and only a few moments are then required to shorten sail and make everything snug. In thick weather, however, especially on the Arctic grounds, there is greater danger on account of ice and of collision with other vessels.

DANGERS TO SEALING VESSELS.—The fur-seal fishery is carried on in the Antarctic Ocean, where the vessels are at all times exposed to sudden changes of wind, and frequently to heavy gales, which unexpectedly overtake them on a lee-shore and sometimes cause their loss.

The schooners used in the seal fisheries are liable to some of the disasters to which the Gloucester fishing vessels are subjected, except those accidents caused by carrying too heavy press of sail, for in this respect the seal fishermen exercise more prudence. Sealing schooners are compelled to keep comparatively near land, following up the boats sent ashore to take the seals, and are exposed to the dangers of being blown ashore or driven on rocks. In landing boats, sent from

the sealing schooners ashore to bring back the seal-skins, there is great danger of being swamped, or upset, and injured by the heavy surf. About four years ago a boat's crew of twelve men was lost in this manner. A successful landing is, of course, attained only by carefully watching for an interval between the breakers, allowing sufficient time for the boat to be run upon the shore.

In the sea-elephant fishery vessels are lost by being driven ashore, or on the rocks, from their anchorage, there being no protection, in the way of good harbors, from the violence of on-shore gales.

The bottom of the bays of Heard's Island, in the Southern Indian Ocean, which is the principal resort for sea-elephants, is hard, slaty rock, and therefore extremely poor ground for anchorage. On this account, as well as from the fact that the harbors afford indifferent shelter, several vessels have been lost in that locality, having been driven ashore, though having out anchors disproportionately large compared with the size of the vessels.

The vessels used in this fishery are exactly like whaling vessels, and the boats belonging to the vessels are the same as those used in both sealing and whaling, than which no boats are better fitted for landing in the surf.

DANGERS TO VESSELS FISHING ALONG THE COAST.—The principal dangers to which the mackerel vessels are exposed are heavy and sudden gales, by which they are taken unawares and driven upon a lee-shore. They generally fish near the coast, and are therefore specially liable to this danger. They are, however, excellent sailers, and, except under extraordinary circumstances, can make a harbor, or gain an offing before the gale is too heavy. The chief disasters to the mackerel fleet have occurred in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, in the vicinity of the Magdalen Islands, Cape Breton, and Prince Edward Island. The north shore of the latter island has been the scene of many disasters. This is a peculiarly undesirable spot for vessels in a gale. There is a long stretch of coast, crescentic in shape, without available harbors in a gale, while at either end of the crescent are long sand-bars, the whole forming a pocket out of which it is very difficult for a vessel to beat its way. In the "Yankee gale" of 1851 a great many vessels were cast ashore along this whole coast. Losses have occurred since then, the severest ones in 1873, when many vessels and lives were lost in that vicinity. Disasters have been frequent at the Magdalens, resulting in loss of property and lives. As many as twenty-four sail of vessels were driven ashore at Pleasant Bay, on Amherst Island, one of the Magdalens, in 1873. Cheticamp, a one-sided harbor or anchoring place on the north side of Cape Breton Island, has also become somewhat noted for the losses that have occurred to the mackerel fleet in that locality. These have been chiefly during the prevalence of southeast gales, which blow with almost irresistible fury from the highlands forming the southern side of the harbor. In this region most of the harbors have a bar at the entrance, and are consequently most difficult of access at the very time when most needed. The water, too, is shallow, and in heavy gales the seas are sharp and exceedingly dangerous, making it very difficult for a vessel to work off from a lee-shore. To add to the danger, there is a current usually setting in the same direction as the wind. When the winds blow over the highlands of the islands they are squally and baffling. A gale in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence is, perhaps, more dreaded by fishermen than one on any other part of the coast, as it can rarely occur without bringing them in close proximity to a lee-shore.

Gloucester has suffered less in proportion to the size of its fleet in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence than have Provincetown, Wellfleet, and the various ports of Maine. Cape Cod lost largely in the gale of 1851, but not so much in that of 1873. One reason for the fewer wrecks among the Gloucester vessels was the fact that they are better prepared with anchors and cables than any other vessels in the world. Great loss of life has resulted from these disasters, though the drifting of a

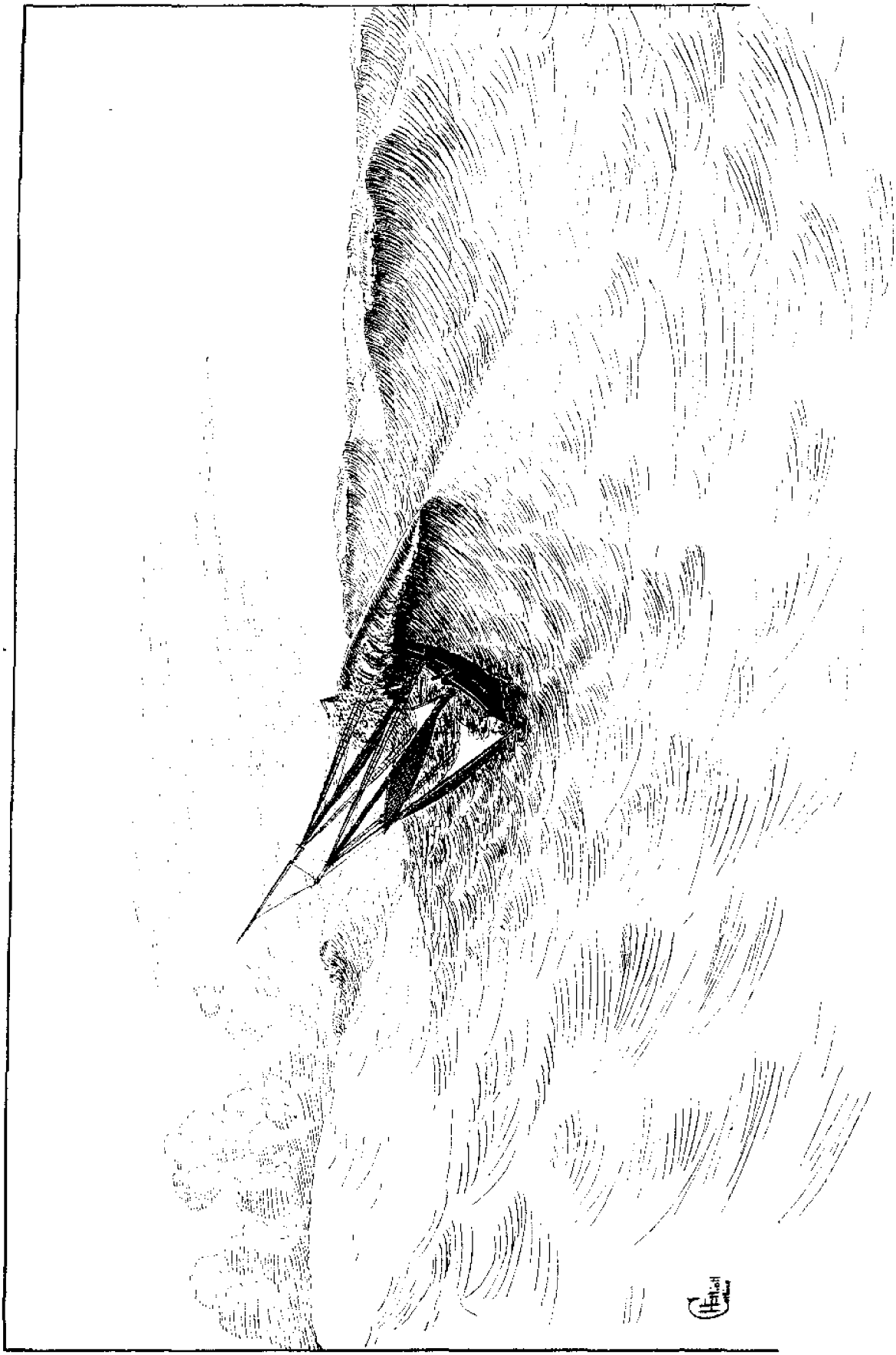
vessel upon the shore is not always attended with fatal consequences. In many cases the shores are sandy, and the crews are enabled to land in safety before the vessel goes to pieces. In some instances the vessels are forced ashore by putting on a great amount of sail, so that the men can land dry-footed when the tide ebbs. It is frequently the case that vessels are launched again, after the gale has abated, without suffering any serious injury. When this is not possible, the fish are landed and sent home, and the fittings and stores, and even the hull itself, sold at auction for the benefit of the owners. The American vessels are so strongly and well built that even after they have been sunk they are sometimes sold at auction as they lie under water, and afterward raised and refitted for active service.

The best chance for safety, in cases where it is seen that a vessel must go ashore, is to run them bow first upon the land, especially where the beach is sloping. When this is done, all sail that the vessel is capable of carrying is spread.

DANGERS WHILE MAKING PASSAGES TO AND FROM THE FISHING GROUNDS.

Fishing vessels making passages at any season of the year are subject to the same dangers as other sea-going crafts. In summer the dangers are comparatively few, for the winds are usually moderate, and in warm weather the crew is in better condition to handle the vessel properly and to meet any exigencies that may arise. Tremendous hurricanes, however, sometimes occur in August and September, and at times there are gales even during the other summer months. Two of the most remarkable hurricanes in recent years were those of September 8, 1869, and August 24, 1873, both of which caused a great amount of destruction to life and property in the fishing fleet. At the time of the hurricane of 1873 several vessels were on the passage home from the Grand Bank. They were deeply laden with fish. Some vessels were lost and many met with serious damage and narrowly escaped destruction. Mention of a few instances of this kind will perhaps suffice. The schooner B. D. Hawkins, of Gloucester, was caught in a hurricane in the vicinity of Sable Island. At first she was hove to under a two-reefed foresail, which was later reduced to a three-reefed. After lying in this manner for some hours, she began to drift toward the northwest bar of Sable Island and was soon in shoal water. It became necessary to take in sail and to anchor, but the wind blew with such violence that the anchor would not hold and the vessel drifted into only 11 or 12 fathoms of water. As she would certainly be lost unless something were done to check her onward course, the spars were cut away and let go "by the board," and, with considerable difficulty, were cleared from the wreck. With the masts gone, she presented a much smaller surface to the wind, and as the current set to windward the anchor held and she rode out the gale. After the gale, jury-masts were rigged and the vessel worked toward the land. She was finally towed to Port Hawkesbury, in the Strait of Canso, to be repaired.

The schooner Sarah P. Ayre, of Gloucester, which was also on her passage home from the Grand Bank, encountered the hurricane in the vicinity of the eastern part of Banquereau. The wind blew with such violence that it was soon impossible to keep sail on the vessel. She was kept nearly head to the sea by the aid of a "drag" rigged to the anchor, which was paid out more than 100 fathoms. After drifting for a few hours the anchor caught bottom on the shoal part of Banquereau in from 16 to 20 fathoms of water, and where the sea ran so high and sharp that for a time it was thought that the vessel would founder. The crew, however, with difficulty succeeded in cutting the cable. The vessel then drove under bare poles before the gale, broadside to the sea and wind. By throwing out oil the force of the waves was so reduced that she met with little



Fishing schooner under sail, tripped by a heavy sea.
Drawing by H. W. Elliott and Capt. J. W. Collins.

loss. It is supposed that the schooner Henry Clay, of Gloucester, another of the Grand Bank fleet returning home, was lost in this same hurricane.

Although the fishermen are exposed to more or less dangers in the summer season, these are greatly increased in the winter months, when heavy gales are very frequent, and the perils made greater by extreme cold. The rigging and sails are then coated with ice and snow and it is almost impossible to either set or shorten sail.

DANGER OF BEING "TRIPPED."—A vessel may be knocked down or tripped, either while running before the wind or lying to in a gale. The comparative shallowness of the American fishing schooners renders them particularly liable to this class of disasters. Some branches of the fisheries, especially those for fresh halibut and haddock, render it imperative that the passage home should be made with the utmost dispatch, in order that cargoes may arrive in good condition and therefore bring the highest prices. Great risks are taken by these fishermen in running their vessels during gales, frequently in the trough of the sea. This is extremely hazardous and likely to result in the vessel being "tripped," or knocked on her beam ends. In February, 1876, the schooner Howard, while returning from the Grand Bank with a trip of fresh halibut, was running in a strong northeast gale. She was knocked on her beam ends twice in one day. At first she was running with a two-reefed mainsail, and when she tripped she went over so far that the men who were sleeping below were thrown from the weather into the leeward bunks and everything movable was upset. Fortunately, she righted with slight damage. Notwithstanding this narrow escape, the demands of the business were such that instead of the vessel being hove to, the sail was shortened and she continued to run safely until just before night, when another sea took her on the quarter and threw her down so low that the sails again lay in the water, the whole after part of the vessel was submerged, and the water ran over the forward companion-way, partially filling the forecastle. For a short time it was thought that she could not regain her upright position, but everything held securely and she soon righted. On the 28th of January, 1881, the schooner Edith M. Pew, employed in the haddock fishery, was thrown on her beam ends, partially filling the cabin and forecastle, and throwing the cabin stove, full of hot coals, into the captain's bunk. The fire was extinguished before any damage was done. She fortunately righted again without any serious disaster. These occurrences are dangerous in the extreme, and fishermen who escape with their lives may be accounted fortunate.

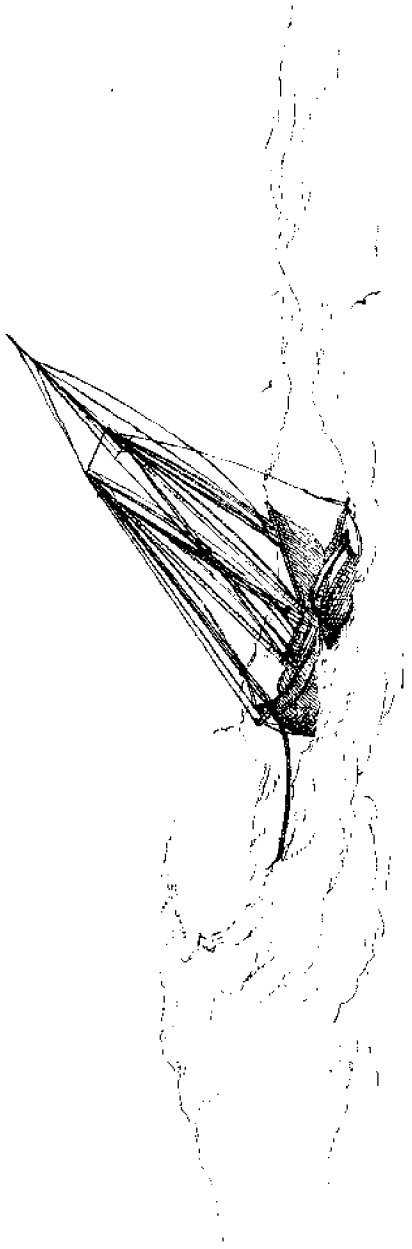
"The schooner Sarah C. Pyle, Capt. Richard Warren, was struck by a cross sea and capsized January 30, 1870. The crew found safety by clinging to the sides of the vessel, until one of their number was able to cut away the main shrouds with a pocket-knife, when the vessel righted, nearly full of water. The foremast was cut away and a jury mast rigged with the foreboom, and such progress as was possible was made in a westerly direction. For eight days the men were obliged to cook their food in sea water, their water casks having been lost, and to melt ice to furnish drink. At the end of that time they encountered a vessel and were furnished with water and other necessaries. Five of the crew were transferred to the vessel, but the skipper and four men remained on the wreck, determined to get it into port. In this condition they encountered a terrific gale, of three days' duration, and were blown off seawards a distance of 245 miles. Even then they remained undaunted by danger and firm in their intention of rescuing the property under their charge, and declined an offer to be taken off. The wreck was towed into a New Jersey port February 13, two weeks after the disaster—a fortnight crowded with great hardship and danger to the men so faithful to duty."*

* Gloucester and its Fisheries, p. 65.

SPARS AND SAILS CARRIED AWAY.—The danger of losing masts and rigging has already been considered. Spars and sails are, however, often carried away under other circumstances. Accidents of this sort are liable to occur at all times, though naturally much more so in the winter season. Perhaps no class of sea-faring men take greater risks than fishermen in carrying a heavy press of sail. In branches of the fisheries where it is extremely desirable to make rapid passages this propensity is carried to an extreme, and, as a result, the sails are sometimes blown away or masts are broken, and, perhaps, other dangers are incurred. Perhaps the most common way in which vessels are dismasted is by carrying a press of sail against a head sea. Another cause of accident is that of jibing fore and aft sails suddenly from one side to the other when there is a strong wind. This generally results in breaking the booms or the mast. The temptation to make a speedy passage is so strong that risks will be taken, although the ultimate results of such reckless daring may be a loss rather than a gain.

RUNNING UNDER, OR CAPSIZING.—The tendency to carry a heavy press of sail may result in greater loss than that of spars and sails. The vessel may run under while going before the wind or capsize when sailing by the wind or with the wind abeam. As there have been numerous and oft-repeated hair-breadth escapes from such disasters, it is probable that much property and many lives have been thus lost. Such disasters are perhaps sometimes unavoidable, because of sudden and unexpected squalls, especially in the night, although many of them are the result of gross recklessness. Not only does the master imperil his own life but also the lives of his crew. So fearless and ardent are the fishermen that the better judgment of the skipper is frequently overcome by the solicitations of the crew, and in the hope of outstripping some rival vessel sail is carried in unreasonable excess. This is often the case when a vessel has just left port. The crew are then, perhaps, under the influence of spirituous liquors, which renders them more regardless of danger than common, and unable to properly perform their duty. Several vessels have been lost, presumably soon after leaving port, and their loss is ascribed to such causes. Of the many instances related by the fishermen of narrow escapes either from carrying sail or being struck by sudden squalls, we will mention the following: In the fall of 1877 the schooner Wachusett was running for the Grand Bank in company with the schooner Howard. With a strong northwest breeze the vessels left Gloucester together, and the following night, when about a hundred miles from Cape Ann, the wind increased. The Howard shortened sail, but the Wachusett, attempting to carry all she had spread for some time longer, was struck by a heavy puff and driven under so that her forecastle was partly filled with water. The men on watch at once lowered the mainsail part way down, which relieved the vessel and a disaster was averted. In March, 1878, the schooner Marion, while returning from the Grand Bank, was running in a southeast rain-storm under three lower sails. It was night and intensely dark. The wind blew strong and was increasing fast. All hands were called to shorten sail. Before it could be done a squall struck the vessel and buried her lee side completely under water and came near sinking her. The blackness of night made it difficult to shorten sail, but the sails were lowered with the least possible delay and fortunately in time to avoid any serious disaster.

The narrow escapes described were in the case of vessels running free from the wind. There is also great danger in carrying a heavy press of sail while sailing by the wind or with the wind abeam. It is not uncommon for some of the more headstrong of the fishing skippers to carry so much sail on their vessels that the lee rail is completely under water most of the time. A few vessels may be able to stand being driven in this manner with comparative safety, but with the majority of them it is highly dangerous, and liable to result not only in the loss of the vessel by capsizing and filling, but also in the loss of the lives of the crew. Many instances are related by the fisher-



Fishing schooner lying to at a drag in a gale on the Banks.
Drawing by Capt. J. W. Collins.

men of narrow escapes from serious disasters while sailing by the wind under too much canvas, and a few instances of loss of vessels, with more or less lives, are on record where they have been capsized in this manner. The schooner Angie S. Friend, engaged in the haddock fishery, while beating up Boston harbor in a strong northwest wind, was capsized, and, having filled, sank to the bottom. Part of the crew succeeded in getting into one of the dories; they were without oars, but fortunately drifted ashore. The rest of the men, with the exception of one, who was drowned, climbed to the masthead, which remained above water, and clung there through the night. They were rescued the following morning in an almost senseless condition. The schooner Henrietta Greenleaf, of Gloucester, while making her first passage to the Grand Bank in the spring of 1876, was struck by a squall in the night and knocked on her beam ends, and quickly filled with water. Four of the crew were drowned in the cabin and forecastle. The rest escaped in two dories, but being without oars they drifted helplessly about. They suffered greatly from exposure to the cold and flying spray. The dories soon separated from each other. One of them was picked up by another fishing vessel, though not until one of the men had died from exposure. The other dory, with five men, was never heard from.

The fury with which these squalls sometimes strike can scarcely be comprehended by those who have not witnessed them. The schooner Abby Dodge, which was making a passage to the Grand Bank in December, 1868, was struck by a tornado with such force that, although she was at the time lying-to under a two-reefed foresail, she was knocked nearly on her beam ends, and only by the prompt lowering of the sail was the vessel saved.

RUNNING ON SHOALS OR ROCKS.—While making passages to and from the fishing grounds, vessels are liable to strike on shoals or outlying ledges. In that part of the Western Atlantic most frequented by New England vessels there are many of these dangerous places, either in the track to the grounds or on the banks themselves. The most remarkable of these shoals, and possibly those which have been the cause of more losses to the fishing fleet than any other, are those of George's Bank. These are but little out of the course of the vessels frequenting George's in winter. A small error in the compass may bring a vessel unexpectedly on these shoals. The more prudent fishermen guard against this danger by the careful use of the sounding-lead. It is difficult to tell how extensive these losses have been. Many vessels have had narrow escapes, but the lost ones leave no survivors to tell the tale.

The shoal of Cashe's Ledge is a source of special danger, as it lies almost directly in the vessel's track, both in going to and coming from most of the fishing grounds. Although this ledge is not shoal enough for a vessel to strike under ordinary circumstances, it nevertheless breaks in heavy weather and is therefore extremely dangerous to be encountered at such times. There is no mark, no buoy nor light-ship, to distinguish the shoal places, and it is not easy to tell when the vessel is approaching them. It cannot be wondered at that several disasters have occurred in that vicinity.

The schooner Rattler, while returning from Newfoundland to Gloucester with a trip of frozen herring, on the 17th of January, 1867, passed over this shoal, where she encountered heavy seas which threw her on her beam ends and dismasted her. It was supposed that the schooner John W. Low was lost there in the same gale.

There is a shoal on the northern part of Brown's Bank on which there is said to be not more than 9 to 14 fathoms of water. This shoal, though not to be dreaded so much as George's or Cashe's Shoals, is, nevertheless, a danger to be carefully avoided. It is in the direct track of the fishing fleets on their way to and from the various banks. Several instances are related in which vessels have met with perilous adventures in that locality and only narrowly escaped destruction.

The long sand-bars that extend out from either end of Sable Island, for a distance of 10 to 12

miles, are very dangerous to vessels on the passage to and from the Grand Bank and other eastern banks. For a great portion of the year this island is enveloped in dense fogs, and the currents in the vicinity being very irregular, it is extremely difficult for the mariner to tell his exact position.

There are outlying rocks and ledges off the coast of Nova Scotia which are in the track of vessels going to and from the Gulf of Saint Lawrence and the eastern banks. Many serious disasters have occurred on these ledges and rocks and there are several instances of narrow escapes from destruction.

DANGERS TO WHALERS.—The principal dangers thus far mentioned have been those encountered by vessels in the cod, mackerel, and halibut fisheries from New England. We have yet to consider the dangers to the whaling and sealing fleets. These vessels are, of course, liable to many of the same perils as the fishing craft, especially to heavy gales and squalls. On the passage to the cruising grounds the whaling vessels do not carry so much sail as merchant or fishing vessels, time not being to them of such vast importance. Dangers, common to other vessels, are less likely to happen to whalers. From the start of a voyage, men are continually aloft on the watch for whales, and are likely to see approaching danger more quickly than in the case of a merchant ship, where only one man is on the lookout, and he, as a rule, not expecting any immediate danger. Whalemen are generally well trained and ready for duty at a moment's notice. Only one-half of the crew, comprising one watch, is on deck at a time, but in case of danger or the approach of whales, all can be quickly summoned. As a rule, the half of a whaling crew includes more men than the entire crew of a merchant vessel of the same size.

Instances of whaling vessels being blown over or of waves breaking over them, thereby causing damage, are not common. Such disasters sometimes, however, occur to vessels in the Arctic or Antarctic Oceans, where they are exposed to severe gales.

DANGERS IN LEAVING AND APPROACHING THE SHORE.

The dangers incurred in approaching and leaving the shores are perhaps more to be dreaded than any others, and great skill, coolness, and prudence are requisite to avoid disaster. This is especially the case in the fisheries of New England, because nearly all of the larger and most frequented fishing grounds lie in an easterly direction from the coast. Easterly winds, which are fair for making passages toward the land, are generally accompanied with thick weather. This is especially the case in winter, when severe snow-storms often overtake the fishermen when but a few miles from land and on a lee shore. The density of the snow often renders it impossible to discern objects far enough off to clear them, and it is at the utmost hazard that the fishermen undertake to make a harbor. They often approach so near the land before the weather becomes thick that it is as dangerous to attempt to keep off shore as it is to approach it. Fishermen are induced to take the latter risk for the reason that if they do succeed in making harbor they will escape being exposed to the storm on a lee shore, and may also obtain a higher price for their fish. Probably no other class of sea-faring men take such great risks in running for the land, but such is the fishermen's knowledge of the coast and their skill in handling their vessels that, although there are many hair-breadth escapes, there are comparatively few disasters resulting from this cause. The following are given as a few of the many instances of this character that have occurred to our fishing fleet:

On the 26th of February, 1863, the schooner Mary E. Hiltz was lost off Marblehead during a violent snow-storm while on her homeward passage from Newfoundland, and one of her crew was drowned.

During a gale on the 10th of January, 1878, the schooner Little Kate went ashore near Duxbury, and her entire crew of thirteen men were drowned.

In February, 1878, the schooner Eastern Queen, of Gloucester, while returning from George's Bank, ran into Massachusetts Bay in the night. The wind was blowing strong from the northeast, and the vessel was running under a press of sail when the lookout suddenly descried land ahead. He instantly shouted to the man at the wheel. The helm was put down and the vessel brought to the wind, but before this had been fairly accomplished she struck on a ledge. Notwithstanding the imminent peril in which they were placed, they succeeded in getting the sheets trimmed by the wind, and this careened the vessel so much that after striking two or three times she jumped over the sunken ledge. Although she had struck heavily she still remained tight and was worked off the lee shore, arriving in Gloucester the following day in safety.

Vessels leaving the land, bound to the fishing grounds, though starting with a favorable wind, may meet with violent easterly gales before obtaining sufficient sea-room. These gales are generally accompanied with snow, and the vessels being on a lee shore it is sometimes difficult to escape disaster. The class of vessels under consideration are better provided with cables and anchors than any other sea-going craft, and are thus enabled to ride out a gale safely on a lee shore, in which no vessel carrying canvas could successfully work to windward. This is, doubtless, one of the reasons why the loss of vessels from being driven ashore in gales is comparatively small. Although gales are less frequent in the spring and summer seasons, the prevalence of dense fogs exposes the fishermen and all seamen to considerable dangers when approaching the land, and many disasters, some of them serious in character, have happened from this cause. Such dangers are not unlike those already discussed, except that they are not usually accompanied by such high winds, and, occuring during the warmer part of the year, are not so sure to be disastrous.

THE DANGERS OF COLLISION WITH OTHER VESSELS.

COLLISIONS ON THE FISHING GROUNDS.—The danger of collision is to be dreaded. Many losses have resulted from accidents of this kind, and lives, as well as property, have been sacrificed. Collisions are especially liable in localities where great numbers of vessels are passing and repassing, as in the vicinity of Long Island Sound, or off Sandy Hook, New York, on Nantucket Shoals, off Cape Cod, or near Cape Sable, Nova Scotia.

Fishing vessels are perhaps more liable to collision than any other vessels, because of their tendency to gather in large fleets, where fish—and especially mackerel—are found abundant. Such is the ardor of pursuit that the loss of booms and other light spars is considered of small importance, and the risk of losing them is often incurred in hopes of obtaining some advantage in the fishery.

Another fruitful season of collision is when a fleet of several hundred sail makes the attempt to enter the same harbor at one time. They crowd in such numbers at the harbor's entrance that it is next to impossible for them all to escape some damage. The injuries thus sustained are generally of minor importance, such as carrying away booms or bowsprits. Some of the serious losses by collision are the following:

On September 26, 1869, the schooner Isaac Walton, of Gloucester, while returning from George's Bank, came into collision with the schooner William Babson, and received such injuries that she sank shortly afterward. The crew were saved.

On March 17, 1864, the schooner Triumph, of the same port, while bound to New York, was run down and sunk by the steamer Western Metropolis. The captain and three of her crew were saved by a boat from the steamer, but two of the crew were drowned.

On January 17, 1873, the schooner Franklin A. was run down by the schooner E. B. Phillips, off Falkland Island, Long Island Sound. The E. B. Phillips struck the Franklin A. amidships, carrying away both masts and cutting through the hull, causing the latter to sink almost immediately. The captain and the mate were knocked overboard by the shock of the colliding vessels, but were rescued, narrowly escaping a watery grave.

On May 31, 1865, the schooner Northern Chief, returning to Gloucester from the Western Bank, was run down and sunk off Cape Sable by the English steamer Bosphorus. The schooner had a crew of eleven men; five of them were in the cabin, and, rushing on deck, succeeded in scrambling up the rigging and boarding the steamer just as the schooner was going down. The rest of the men were drowned. This disaster was attributed to carelessness on the part of those keeping watch on board the steamer.

On May 2, 1853, the schooner Ocean Nymph, of Gloucester, was run down by the ship Sarah Jane off Cape Cod, but the crew were saved.

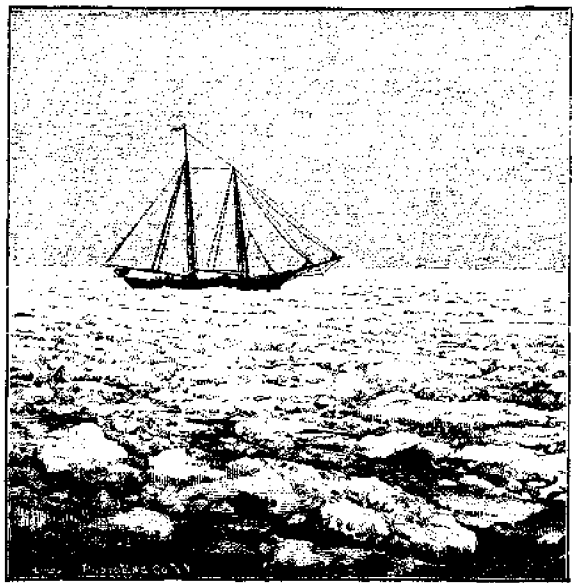
Many other instances might be related where vessels and lives have been lost from collision, and many more in which the vessels were badly injured.

Collisions sometimes occur through gross recklessness, or perhaps purposely in a spirit of retaliation or spite.

Among the vessels engaged in the mackerel fishery, when jigging was the method of capture employed, there was a sharp competition not only between the Provincial and American fleets, but to a still greater extent between vessels from different ports along the American coast, and sometimes among those who were close neighbors at home.

When mackerel were plenty in any one locality, large fleets congregated there, lying to in close proximity. At such times each was anxious to secure as great a share of fish as possible, and in the attempt to do this the rights of other vessels were considered of secondary importance. One practice, that of "lee-bowing," as it is called, was often a cause of ill feeling. To "lee-bow" a vessel is to heave to directly under her lee, thus tolling away the fish which are playing alongside, having been attracted by the bait which has already been thrown overboard. The skippers of the vessels thus deprived of fish to which they had the first right, often seek a rather savage revenge. By dint of skillful seamanship they carry away a boom or a boat of their rival without receiving any injury themselves. Such injuries may sometimes be repaired at once, though they may cause the loss of much valuable time spent in port. When from two hundred to four hundred sail of vessels are closely packed together it is not uncommon for many accidents to happen even when they are unintentional, especially when there is a fresh breeze blowing. It is then not unusual for a number of vessels to meet with such minor disasters as the carrying away of mainbooms or bowsprits, and even more serious damage may be inflicted.

One of the many instances of this kind took place off the northern shores of Cape Breton in the fall of 1867. A fleet numbering between two and three hundred sail had collected in the vicinity of Cheticamp, and, as it was late in the fall and the mackerel were moving rapidly on their way from the fishing grounds, it was evident that another chance of catching them during that season was unlikely to present itself. The mackerel bit freely, but would stay only for a short time alongside of the vessels. For this reason the vessels were under way most of the time. The wind blew fresh and the crews were eager to improve this last opportunity for that season. A great many of them were reckless in the extreme. A number of the vessels had their sails torn, their spars carried away, and many were run down and cut nearly to the water's edge. The disabled vessels were obliged to cease fishing and haul out of the fleet for repairs. The loss of the opportunity to fish seemed to be the lesser evil, for they were on a rock-bound coast and far from any



Fishing schooner on the Banks, caught in an ice-floe.

From a photograph.

good harbor. With a sudden change of wind they would have been exposed to the dangers of a lee shore, which, in their disabled condition, would probably have resulted in the loss of the vessel.

DANGERS IN HARBORS.

To a person unacquainted with a seaman's life it might seem probable that vessels in harbor would be free from danger, but this is not always the case. There have been instances of great loss of property, and even of life, in the case of vessels in harbor at the time of the disaster. These losses are sometimes due to the insecurity of the harbors during gales. More especially is this the case if there is a large fleet of fishing vessels at anchor together with coasting vessels, which are not so well provided with cables and anchors. Sometimes a vessel of the latter class will strike adrift, and, coming in contact with others, will be the means of driving them ashore. Many losses of this kind have occurred in the Gulf of Saint Lawrence, where several of the places resorted to by fishermen for shelter are simply "one-sided" harbors, affording protection to the vessels when the wind is in certain directions and are open to other winds. Mention has already been made of losses at Pleasant Bay and Cheticamp, which are two shelters of this class, where many serious disasters have occurred.

On September 8, 1869, a severe hurricane occurred on the New England coast, in which several Gloucester vessels were lost in shelters of this insecure kind. Serious disasters have also taken place at Souris, Prince Edward Island. Many losses have also occurred in harbors thought to be secure. Among these may be mentioned several disasters that have occurred at Port Hood, Cape Breton, Malpeque or Richmond Harbor, Prince Edward Island, and many other harbors along our coast and that of Nova Scotia. Instances of losses occurring in harbors of this kind might be multiplied, but this is probably not necessary, since those interested in the subject can find numerous disasters of this kind recorded in newspapers printed in the large fishing ports.

DANGERS FROM ICE.

DANGERS TO FISHING VESSELS.—The danger from collision with ice is one to which the vessels engaged in the Grand Bank, Newfoundland, Cape North, Labrador, and Greenland fisheries are particularly liable.

In the latter part of winter and in early spring large masses of field ice, as well as many icebergs, drift far south, covering a large extent of the eastern fishing grounds, including Flemish Cap, Grand Bank, Saint Peter's Bank, and Banquereau, and ice has in some seasons extended so far to the westward as to drive the vessels from parts of Western Bank. There are periods of a few years in succession when the fishermen are troubled but little by the floating ice, but there is more or less danger each spring on the Banks, and still more danger while making passages to and from them.

For several weeks in the springs of 1875 and 1876 the whole of Banquereau and Green Bank, part of the Western Bank, and the greater part of the Grand Bank, were covered with immense fields of drifting ice. Many vessels were driven from the fishing grounds and obliged to lay by, waiting for the ice to recede. Several of them were in collision with the ice or it drove foul of them when they were at anchor. Some vessels received considerable damage, their planking being so badly chafed as to necessitate repairs. It is not positively known that any vessels engaged in the Grand Bank fishery met with very serious damage by collision with ice during those seasons, but it is supposed that the loss of the James L. Shute and Janet Middleton, in the spring of 1876, was caused in this manner. This seems the more probable as the ice, for some weeks about the time they were on their passage to the Grand Bank, was drifted from 75 to 100 miles south of the lati-

tude of Sable Island, and was, therefore, directly in their course. Much of this ice was very heavy, and a collision with it, especially when a vessel was running at great speed, would result in almost certain destruction. Many narrow escapes from disaster occurred to the halibut fleet while on the passage home, but as most of the fishermen were aware of the presence of the ice they generally managed to escape without any serious loss.

Vessels engaged in the Newfoundland herring fishery have been surrounded by field ice for weeks at a time,* while on the passage home, and many thrilling tales are told of such narrow escapes from disaster. Doubtless some of the losses of vessels engaged in this fishery have been the result of collisions with ice, although none of the crews of the missing schooners have been left to tell the story of such disaster.

The vessels engaged in the cod fishery about Cape North, north end of Cape Breton Island, sometimes meet with considerable difficulty from drifting field-ice and are often driven from the fishing ground. In one instance a vessel started her planking by collision with ice in that vicinity so that she sprung a leak, and only by great exertions was kept afloat until she reached a place of safety. More or less difficulty is also experienced by vessels engaged in the Magdalen herring fishery. They encounter drifting ice on their passage to those islands in the spring, and, although we have no accounts of any serious disasters, the immunity from such may be ascribed to the extreme vigilance of the fishermen. Vessels fishing on the Flemish Cap are very much exposed to contact with icebergs even as late as July.

Perhaps no other vessels are so much exposed to danger from ice as the halibut fleet of New England. They meet with many drifting icebergs and, occasionally, with large masses of field-ice, on their route to the northern grounds. In the spring of 1880 several vessels which started for Greenland were obliged to give up the voyage and return to the Grand Bank on this account.

Ice, freezing in masses on the vessel's sails and rigging in extremely cold weather, is, perhaps, more to be dreaded than collision with floating ice.

In the winter season the temperature is often so low that every bit of flying spray congeals wherever it strikes, and the vessels soon become so loaded down that they are almost unmanageable. This is one of the commonest perils of the winter fisheries, and one that requires great fortitude and resolution to overcome. Any neglect to improve every opportunity of freeing the vessel from ice would soon result in her foundering. Sometimes, for days and nights together, the men must remain on deck, constantly employed in pounding the ice and always at the imminent risk of being swept overboard. Vessels sometimes arrive in fishing ports so badly "iced up" that it is impossible to lower the sails or to bring them to an anchor.

DANGERS TO WHALING VESSELS.—On the homeward passage the Arctic whaling vessels, in thick weather, are in constant danger from icebergs, especially about Hudson's Bay, Cumberland Gulf, and Davis Straits. There is less danger on the outward passage, as the "watch on deck" is more eagerly on the lookout. On the homeward voyage, however, when the approach of whales

* *Twenty-four days in the ice.*—Schooners Hereward and Rattler, which left this port for Newfoundland for a load of frozen herring in December last, got frozen in while on the homeward passage, February 9, in Fortune Bay, and remained there eleven days. Got clear the 19th, and went into the ice again the same day and remained there until March 3. Schooners S. C. Noyes, of Newburyport, and Charles A. Ropes, of Camden, Me., were also in the same predicament. Captain Pennington (of the Hereward) made a drawing of the scene, in which the four vessels are visible fast locked in the ice, and the crews of the Hereward and Rattler busily engaged in getting some provisions from the S. C. Noyes, which lay at a distance of 3 miles. The ice was so rough that they were obliged to carry the flour in bags, and the men with the bags on their backs, and the captain with the empty barrel to put it in when it reached the vessel, makes a lively scene. It was a tedious experience for all hands, and glad enough were they to get clear of their icy bonds. Fortunate it was that the Noyes could supply them with flour, otherwise the men would have suffered for this necessary of life.—*Cape Ann Advertiser, March* 17, 1876.

is not so much an object of interest, the lookout is not kept with such vigilance. The greatest precautions against collision with ice are taken from the time the vessels approach the region where they expect to find ice—about the latter part of June—through July, August, and the first part of September.

Vessels engaged in the whale fisheries of the Arctic Sea, north of Bering's Straits, are exposed to great danger from ice, and many of them have been lost, either by being driven on shore by the ice or crushed between masses of heavy pack-ice.

Since 1871 more than fifty whaling vessels have been lost in the Arctic, north of Bering's Straits. In 1871 thirty-four out of a fleet of thirty-nine vessels were crushed in the pack-ice. In 1876 twelve out of a fleet of twenty sail were lost under similar circumstances. The story of the great disaster of 1871 is told by Starbuck, in his History of the Whale Fishery. He says: "In the fall of 1871 came news of a terrible disaster to the Arctic fleet, rivaling in its extent the depredations of the rebel cruisers. Off Point Belcher thirty-four vessels lay crushed and mangled in the ice; in Honolulu were over twelve hundred seamen who, by this catastrophe, were shipwrecked. * * * On the 2d of September the brig Comet was caught by the heavy ice and completely crushed, her crew barely escaping to the other vessels. * * * Nothing but ice was visible offshore, the only clear water being where the fleet lay, and that narrowed to a strip from 200 yards to half a mile in width, and extending from Point Belcher to 2 or 3 miles south of Wainwright Inlet. * * * On the 7th of September the bark Roman, while cutting-in a whale, was caught between two immense floes of ice off Sea Horse Islands, whence she had helplessly drifted, and crushed to atoms, the officers and crew escaping over the ice, saving scarcely anything but their lives. The next day the bark Awashonks met a similar fate, and a third fugitive crew was distributed among the remaining ships." There appeared no chance of relief to the ice-bound vessels, and after consultation among the captains it was agreed to abandon their ships, and a day set when they would take to boats in hopes of reaching other vessels which were outside the barrier. "The morning of the 14th of September came, and a sad day it was to the crews of the ice-bound crafts. At noon the signals, flags at the mastheads, union down, were set, which told them the time had come when they must sever themselves from their vessels. As a stricken family feels when the devouring flames destroy the home which was their shelter, and with it the little souvenirs and priceless memorials which had been so carefully collected and so earnestly treasured, so feels the mariner when compelled to tear himself from the ship which seems to him at once parent, friend, and shelter." After two days' struggling with the ice and waves, the boats, heavily loaded with their freight of 1,200 whalemen, reached the more fortunate vessels and were kindly cared for by their fellows. Fortunately no lives were lost by this disaster, though the money loss was upwards of a million and a half of dollars. The loss by the disaster of 1876 was fifty men, and vessels and cargoes valued at $800,000. Further details of these and other disasters to the Arctic fleet are given in another section of this report, which discusses the history and methods of the whale fishery.

DANGERS FROM FIRE AND LIGHTNING.

Fishing vessels are sometimes exposed to dangers from fire and lightning, which cause many mishaps, if not serious disasters. In June, 1864, a fire broke out in the forecastle of the schooner Sea Witch, at anchor on Cashe's Ledge. It was discovered by the men who were on deck dressing fish. They immediately rushed forward with buckets, and by the most strenuous efforts, exposing themselves the while to the flames, succeeded in extinguishing the fire before any very serious damage had been done. Another instance of this kind occurred to the schooner Princess, of

Bucksport, Me., a few years later, while lying in Prospect Harbor, Nova Scotia. All of the crew except the captain had gone to the wreck of the steamer Atlantic, a few miles distant from the harbor. The fire broke out in the forecastle. It was first observed by the crews of some vessels near by, and they proceeded to the rescue. Although the fire was well under way, they succeeded in extinguishing it by cutting holes through the deck, but not before the vessel was badly damaged.

Instances of vessels having been struck by lightning are not at all rare, but as a general thing they are only dismasted or receive some other slight injuries. There are a few cases, also, where some of the crew have been very seriously injured.

DANGERS OF ATTACKS FROM MARINE ANIMALS.

Fishing vessels are liable to attacks from whales and swordfish. In the "History of the Swordfish"* instances are recorded of attacks upon vessels by swordfish. Many of the New England fishermen have their stories of swordfish striking their vessel. A New London fisherman of many years' experience states that there are several broken swords in the hull of his vessel. The danger from these attacks is from leaks, which have sometimes resulted in much damge.

Whales have been known to strike and cause the destruction of merchant and whaling ships, but we have no record of such disaster to fishing craft. "The Fisheries from 1623 to 1876," published at Gloucester, gives the particulars of a vessel of that port being towed by a whale. The fluke of the anchor caught in the blow-hole of the whale, and the frightened animal rushed through the water with the vessel in tow. It became necessary to cut the cable in order to save several of the crew, who were away from the vessel hauling their trawls. In 1878 the ship Columbia was sunk off the Newfoundland Banks by a blow from a whale. The crew took to the boats, and were rescued by Captain Deddes, of the steamer P. Caland. The story of the loss of the whaleship Essex in the southern seas is one of the most familiar in the annals of the whale fishery. "The boats of the Essex had killed the calf of a whale, when the mother, apparently understanding their connection with the ship, attacked it, retreating about a mile to get headway, and striking the vessel on the bows, staving in its timbers and making a hole so large that it was useless to attempt to stop the leak." The crew took to the boats, and were finally picked up.

DANGERS FROM THE DEFECTS OF BAD CONSTRUCTION OR FROM AGE.

Although the majority of the fishing vessels are as substantially built as any in the world and are well calculated in this respect to withstand the strains which may be brought to bear upon them, yet unprincipled builders sometimes take advantage, when building a vessel for sale, to slight them in certain particulars. These may be briefly mentioned as—(1) by putting in defective timber or planks; (2) by insufficient fastening; and (3) by a lack of care in calking the vessel.

If to these defects are also added others in the rigging of the vessel, it follows as a matter of course that she is poorly calculated to withstand the vicissitudes and perils incident to the pursuit of the fisheries. Vessels of this kind are sometimes built to be sold at a cheap rate, but such a practice is entirely wrong, for it exposes the lives of many men to the danger of being lost at sea. There should be provision for the legal punishment of those who engage in such nefarious enterprises.

Defects are, however, more frequently to be met with in old vessels, which are in some cases sent to sea as long as it is possible to obtain a crew for them, and it is to be wondered at that more fatal disasters have not resulted from such a practice. There is no doubt that the cause of

* Report U. S. Fish Commissioner, Part VIII, 1880.

the loss of many valuable lives might be traced to this source; and owners who will persist in exposing men to such peril, certainly are deserving of the severest condemnation.

The fisherman, who is called upon to meet many dangers with which each voyage brings him in contact, and for the results from which the owners may not be held responsible, should have at least the security of a stanch and well-rigged vessel.

50. DANGERS TO FISHERMEN ON VESSELS AND IN BOATS.

DANGERS TO FISHERMEN ON VESSELS.

SEAS STRIKING THE DECK.—The most common accident which is liable to occur is caused by heavy seas, which strike the fishermen as they stand upon the deck of a vessel, knocking them down and often inflicting serious injuries.

In the winter of 1877 William Brown, one of the crew of the schooner Howard, of Gloucester, was struck by a sea and severely injured by being knocked against the bows of the dories which were lashed amidships.

In December, 1880, one of the crew of the schooner David A. Story was standing on watch at the bow of the schooner when a heavy sea struck the vessel. To avoid being thrown overboard, he grasped the iron braces of the forward stove funnel. The sea knocked the vessel upon her beam-ends, and when she righted he was found insensible, with his leg broken and several splinters from the fore boom, which had been broken by the force of the sea, driven entirely through the limb.

Instances of this sort might be multiplied, but it is sufficient to say that they occur frequently every winter, and rarely without serious or fatal results to the victims, who are sometimes washed overboard.

DANGERS OF FALLING FROM THE RIGGING.—Another serious danger is that of falling from aloft. This kind of accident, however, occurs less frequently than the former.

Capt. Garret Galvin, in the spring of 1875, fell from the masthead of the schooner Restless, while on the Grand Banks, striking the cable-tier. He received no serious injury. His was a very fortunate escape, for lives are sometimes lost in this way, and a person thus falling rarely escapes with less serious results than the fracture of a limb.

In the spring of 1878 Capt. Joseph Campbell, of Gloucester, fell from the masthead of his vessel, which lay at anchor on the Banks, and was killed. Men sometimes fall from the main boom while engaged in reefing the mainsail. In most cases these accidents are fatal, since at such times the weather is generally too rough to permit their being rescued. Such falls are usually occasioned by a sudden lurching of the vessel, causing the men to lose their hold.

Whalemen sometimes fall from the rigging. Such accidents are usually the result of carelessness on the part of the sailors themselves. At times, while the crew are taking in sail, the canvas wraps itself around a sailor and throws him from the yard. Whether he falls on deck or overboard depends upon the position he occupies on the yard.

DANGERS FROM MOVEMENTS OF THE BOOMS.—Fishermen are sometimes injured by a blow from one of the booms, usually the fore-boom, as it swings from side to side. The injuries are usually to the head, though sometimes the man is further wounded by being knocked upon the deck. It is quite common, also, for them to be thrown overboard by a blow of the boom or by becoming entangled in swinging ropes.

Men are sometimes thrown overboard by a sudden lurch of the vessel. They are generally lost, for at such times it is too rough to lower a boat to rescue them.

DANGER OF BEING WASHED FROM THE BOWSPRIT OR JIB-BOOM.—Another danger is encountered by fishermen while on the bowsprit engaged in furling or reefing the jib. As the vessel plunges up and down, the bowsprit is often completely submerged. It is then very difficult for a man to retain his hold and to prevent being washed off and drowned. The force of the sea added to the resistance of the water to the rapid motion of the plunging vessel brings tremendous power to bear upon any object on the bowsprit.

A remedy for disasters of this class is possible. If, as in the English cutter and some other European vessels, our schooners were provided with two jibs, or rather with a fore staysail and a small jib, instead of the immense jib which is now commonly in use, in heavy weather the jib could be furled and the men would not be obliged to go outside of the bow to shorten sail. This style of rigging has been introduced to some extent upon the New England pilot-boats and upon the larger class of Nova Scotia schooners, and is quite as applicable to all fishing vessels.

Men going on to a jib-boom to furl the flying jib are liable to be washed overboard, and many instances are on record of disasters of this kind, most of which have resulted in loss of life.

Men also sometimes fall overboard by the parting of the foot-ropes, or by missing their hold during a sudden lurch of the vessel.

DANGERS MET WITH IN HOLDING THE CABLE.—There is danger in connection with "holding the cable" when it is "hove up" or hauled in, either to change the arrangements of the chafing gear or to "weigh the anchor." The sudden rise of a vessel on the crest of a wave may jerk the cable forward and throw the persons who are holding it with much violence over the windlass and into contact with the iron brakes, thus inflicting injuries.

DANGER FROM LIGHTNING.—Vessels are sometimes struck by lightning, their masts shattered, and injuries inflicted to the crew. This sometimes occurs on the Banks, and in 1878 several vessels were thus injured while lying at the wharves at Gloucester.

DANGERS FROM FURNITURE.—Minor accidents are frequent on shipboard. When a vessel is knocked down by a sea the cabin stove may break loose and tumble about, burning some of the men. In the gale of December 9, 1876, such an accident occurred to one of the crew of the schooner Ruth Groves, of Gloucester.

DANGERS FROM CUTS OR BRUISES.—In dressing fish or cutting bait sudden movements of the vessel are likely to cause fishermen to cut their hands. Such accidents, however, are not generally serious, though fingers and thumbs are sometimes sacrificed. When a man is engaged in fishing the least cut or scratch soon becomes a painful sore, for it is impossible to protect the raw surface from the slime and salt with which the hands are constantly in contact. Sometimes painful abscesses, or what are called by the fishermen "gurry sores," are the result. In the summer months fishermen suffer a great annoyance from the stings of "sun-jellies," "sun-squalls," or "sea-nettles," usually of the species *Cyanea arctica*. The tentacles of these animals cling to the lines and seines and the stings of the lassoo cells cause the most intense pain at times. On the southern coast even more serious results are caused by contact with the tentacles of the Portuguese man-of-war, which sometimes produces a temporary paralysis of the muscles and always acute suffering. All fishermen protect their hands, when dressing fish, by wearing mittens, but, nevertheless, slime will penetrate between the fibres and get upon the skin. In handling the lines, the fishermen use the so-called "nippers," knitted from woolen yarn. Cots of rubber or wool are used by the mackerel fishermen in order to protect their fingers when fishing with hand-lines; and sometimes they wind yarn around their fingers for the same reason. Almost all of the fishermen upon the Banks are afflicted with small boils (called "Pin-jinnets") upon the forearm, caused by the chafing of the

heavy clothing saturated with salt water and the contact of the cuff of the oil-jacket with the flesh of the wrist.

DANGERS TO FISHERMEN IN SMALL BOATS.

The fishermen in trawling on the Banks usually go out in their dories from one to three miles from the vessel for the trawls, and are exposed to numerous dangers.

CAPSIZED BY HEAVY SEAS.—Boats are capsized either when the men are rowing to and from the vessel, or when they are engaged in hauling or setting the trawls. Pages could be filled with instances of this kind, often resulting in loss of life, and frequently remarkable for examples of heroism on the part of fishermen who have made attempts, at the risk of their own lives, to save their weaker comrades.

"Schooner Neptune's Bride was wrecked at Malcomb's Ledge, Me., September 22, 1860. Twelve of her fourteen men found a watery grave by the swamping of the boat in which they sought to reach the shore. One man, Henry Johnson, was enabled to regain the boat. She was full of water, but fortunately there was a bucket in her, and a coil of rope. With the former he *commenced bailing, and by dint of hard labor managed to free her, although she was continually* taking in water. A hogshead tub from the vessel had drifted across the boat amidships. This he secured with his rope, and that made the boat ride more easily. When he got tired of bailing the boat he would crawl into the tub, and when that got full of water he would commence bailing the boat again. He knew not whither he was drifting, and became so utterly exhausted that, long ere daylight dawned, he fell asleep. At noon-time a Belfast schooner sighted the craft, bore down to her, and her single passenger was received on board and kindly cared for. One other of the crew, named Marsh, secured a resting place at the foremast-head, where for eighteen hours he endured *greater agonies than death could inflict. The surging waters reached to his waist, while the pitti*less rain beat upon his unprotected head, and the pangs of thirst and hunger clamored that he should cease the unequal strife and seek oblivion in the seething flood. But the instinct of self-preservation was strong, and he maintained his position until his feet were chafed and raw, and delirium set in. His critical position was at last discovered by two fishermen on Seal Island, and he was taken off and tenderly cared for until reason resumed its throne and he was able to take passage for home."*

CAPSIZED BY WEIGHT OF TRAWL.—There is danger of being upset by the strain on the trawl line, as the dory rises upon the sea when the men are hauling in the line. The line is usually, in such cases, around the trawl-winch, or "hurdy-gurdy," and cannot be slackened quick enough to prevent upsetting the dory.

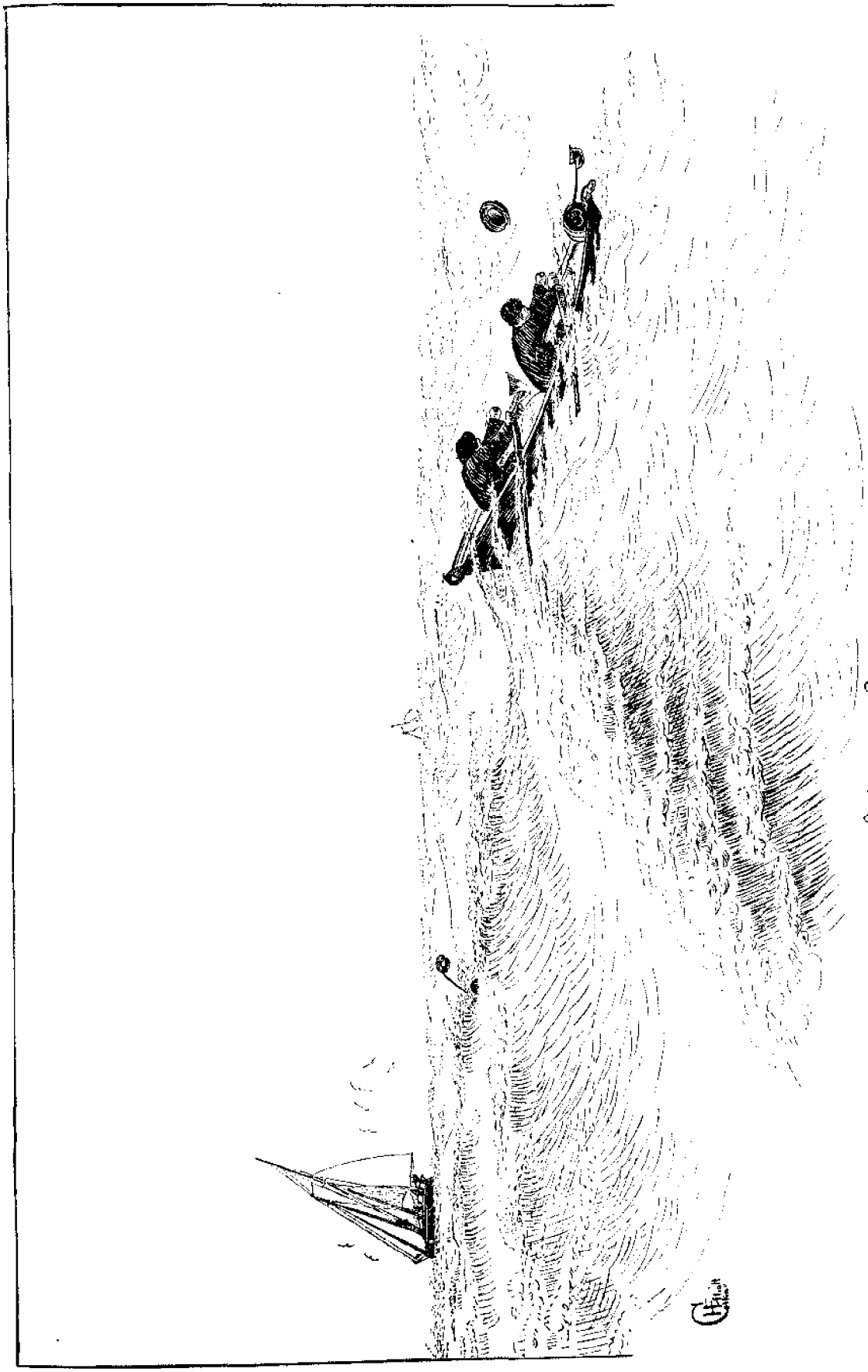
CAPSIZED BY SHIPPING WATER.—A dory heavily loaded with fish is liable to be upset by shipping a quantity of water which brings the gunwales below the surface. When a boat is upset in this way the men seldom escape from drowning. They are clothed from head to toe in heavy clothing, besides stiff outer clothing of oiled cotton or rubber, and with heavy boots, so that they have little power of movement in the water. In addition to this the water is extremely cold on the Banks, in summer being rarely above 40° or 42°, and in winter nearly at the freezing point; the unfortunate fishermen become so chilled that they are incapable of much exertion. Of late years the Gloucester fishermen have adopted the custom of fitting the dories with "plug beckets," which are loops of rope fastened to the under side of the plug in the bottom of the dory. This loop, or "becket," is large enough for a man to thrust his arm through, and he can thus cling to the bottom of the boat until help may reach him. A "life-line" is also occasionally used. This is

* Gloucester and its Fisheries, pp. 66, 67.

a light rope stretched along the bottom of the dory nearly from stem to stern, being fastened at each end and in the middle to small staples, and with two or three "beckets" large enough for a man's arm. These are preferable to the "plug-beckets" because they enable two or three men to cling to the bottom of one dory, which is sufficiently buoyant to support them without difficulty, but not to allow them to rest upon it. Numerous instances of the preservation of life by the use of this simple means are on record, and it is simple inhumanity to send men away from the vessel in dories which are not equipped with some such means of safety, for it is almost impossible for a fisherman to retain hold of the smooth slippery bottom of a capsized dory, constantly swept by the breaking seas. The "life-line" was introduced a few years ago, but the "plug-becket" has been in use 10 or 15 years, though not to much extent until recently. These ropes do not impede the speed of the dory, and the only objection ever urged against them is that they interfere with sliding the dories about on the decks of the vessels.

WASHED FROM THE BOAT.—The fishermen are quite often washed out of their dories by breaking seas. In the fall of 1880 Thomas R. Lee, of Gloucester, while engaged in hauling a halibut trawl on the Grand Bank, was struck by a sea and thrown 15 or 20 feet from his dory. He rose to the surface twice, but was so much encumbered by his clothing that he was unable to swim. As he was sinking the third time he caught the trawl, which was fastened to the dory. By means of this he tried to haul himself up, but when still about three fathoms under water one of the hooks caught in his finger and went completely through it. He then grasped the trawl above his head with the other hand and by a sudden jerk tore the hook from his finger. He hauled himself up and reached the gunwale, but just then another hook caught in his clothing, which rendered it difficult for him to get into the boat. He called to his dorymate for help, but the man was too frightened to assist him. By a great effort he pulled himself over the side of the dory and fell down exhausted. This is an instance of the dogged pluck of the typical Gloucester fisherman, for after recovering from the first exhaustion he persisted in hauling his trawl and filling his dory with fish before returning to the vessel.

DANGER FROM SQUALLS.—While tending their trawls fishermen are liable to be overtaken by heavy squalls, especially in the winter season, and are unable to reach their vessels. Such squalls are particularly dangerous because of the force of the wind, which creates high seas, and they are often accompanied with dense snow, which adds to the anxiety and peril. Instances of this kind are constantly occurring, and afford some of the most exciting episodes in the fisherman's life, since, in every instance, a determined and heroic effort is made to regain the vessel in spite of the wind and sea. Their efforts are often aided by their shipmates on the vessel, who fasten a line to a dory or buoy and allow it to drift out to the men who are struggling to reach the vessel. Sometimes over a mile of rope is paid out in this manner, which expedient has resulted in the saving of numerous lives. When that is not available the cable has sometimes been cut or the anchor broken out by putting sail on the vessel, which then runs down toward the dory and rescues the men. At night a light is sometimes rigged to the paid-out dory. When all these expedients fail the lost fishermen may be rescued by other vessels in the neighborhood, but too often they drift about for several days before being picked up. Fishermen have been thus adrift for six days without food or water and finally rescued, and many more have perished after drifting for a long time or have been soon swamped by the breaking waves. When fishermen are thus adrift and exposed to heavy seas they may succeed in keeping the dory afloat by means of rigging a "drag," a contrivance by which the head of the dory is kept to the wind and sea, and it is thus prevented from swamping. This "drag" is often made of the body of a dead halibut by tying it by the head and tail. A buoy keg, with a hole in it, which will fill with water and thus present a



Dory crew of halibut fishermen caught to leeward in a squall; trawl buoy and line drifted astern for their rescue

Drawing by H. W. Elliott and Capt. J. W. Collins.

resistance to the sea, is also used with the same result. The men meanwhile steady the boat with their oars to prevent it from swinging "side to the wind."

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST LOSS OF LIFE.—Much suffering and loss of life might be prevented if the fishermen would carry food and water in their dories when they go out to haul the trawls. So many vessels are passing daily in the vicinity of the fishing grounds that the chances are against a boat drifting for many days without being picked up, provided the men are able to keep up their strength and spirits. Many of the banks are so near the land that the men could succeed in reaching it if they had provisions to support their strength for a few days. The custom of carrying water and occasionally provisions in the dories in thick weather is, it is claimed, coming more into favor, but this simple precaution against disaster and suffering should be insisted upon by humane public sentiment, and possibly also by legal enactment.

It has been suggested that it would be useless to make laws for the government of fishermen when they are out of sight of the officers of the law, but no matter how careless the crew and skippers may be, if a law allowed the fishermen to bring a suit for damages against the master and owners of a vessel which sent them out in a small boat without provisions, it would be clearly to the interest of the latter to oblige them to carry the necessities of life, no matter how careless the men themselves might be.

John Maynard, of New London, and William Corthell, of Lyme, Conn., of schooner Gilson Carman, left that vessel on George's on Wednesday, March 17, 1869, in a dory, to haul their trawls, and while doing so a very heavy thunder-squall sprang up, driving them from the banks. They had at the time several halibut and from sixty to seventy codfish, which they had to throw overboard, with the exception of one, which they retained to eat. After eating a little it made them sick, and they were obliged to throw it away. On Thursday night they saw a vessel, but were unable to attract her attention; were drifted about all day Friday and Friday night, without anything to eat. On Saturday morning a duck lit in the vicinity of the boat, which they managed to kill and ate it raw. On Saturday night, when they had nearly given up the idea of being saved, they made a light a few miles ahead. They immediately pulled for it, when it proved to be the schooner Henry Clay. During the time they were in the boat they had a steady storm of rain and snow and were frequently capsized, but with the aid of a bucket they managed to keep the boat clear of water. Corthell had his feet badly frozen. Maynard's arm was badly chafed and swollen, and both suffered greatly.*

"The Dominion Government steamer Newfield, Captain Guilford, arrived at Halifax from Sable Island to-day, and brought up William Coleman and James McGrath, who had landed on the island. The two men belonged to the fishing schooner Procter Brothers, of Gloucester, Mass. They left the vessel in a dory on the western banks of Newfoundland on the morning of Sunday, April 18, to attend to their trawls. While at this work a gale sprang up, and they were unable to get back to the vessel. For five days they drifted about at the mercy of wind and waves, without food or water. Their sufferings were intense, as the weather was very cold. McGrath had both feet badly frozen. On the evening of Tuesday, April 22, their dory drifted ashore on Sable Island, and the two men are kindly cared for by the men stationed there to aid wrecked people."†

DANGERS OF FOG OR THICK WEATHER.—There is constant danger, at all seasons of the year, of fishermen, while out in the boats, losing sight of the vessels. In summer, when there is no snow, the fogs are most prevalent. To prevent accidents of this sort, so far as possible, vessels are provided with bells, horns, and guns. The common tin horn and Anderson's patent horn, in which the air is forced through a reed by a piston, are the most common horns in use. Occasionally the

* Gloucester and its Fisheries, p. 66. † Boston Herald, April 30, 1880.

old-fashioned conch-shell horn is carried, and this is considered by many experienced fishermen superior to the tin horn. Some vessels carry muskets and a few of them small cannon. The firing of cannon is so expensive and dangerous that they can only be used in an emergency, and they are not generally fired until too late to be of any assistance to the men who are astray. It is estimated that an ordinary horn can be heard in calm weather from 1 mile to 1½ miles; with an ordinary breeze it can be heard to the windward perhaps not 200 yards, to the leeward perhaps a mile; but in much of the weather in which fishermen are out hauling their trawls such a horn cannot be heard to a greater distance than one-quarter the length of one of their trawl-lines.

An objection to the Anderson piston horn is that it gets so easily out of repair that sometimes, after being used for a few hours, it is of no further service until it has been overhauled.

There are very serious objections to the use of the mouth horn. The labor of blowing this devolves upon the skipper, who remains on board the vessel, and is obliged to keep blowing from morning until night, in order that the boats may keep within a safe distance of the vessel. This continual blowing is very exhausting, so that the skipper's power to aid his men is very much diminished at the close of the day, when the sound of his horn is generally most needed. Some device by which a succession of loud blasts, at frequent intervals, can be kept up on board of the vessels, especially some horn which can be worked without the aid of the human lungs, and powerful enough to be heard a long distance, would be of the greatest importance to our fishermen, as well as to sea-faring men of all classes and nations.

Much of the danger incurred by the thickness of the fog preventing the men in the dories from seeing their vessel may be averted by the use of a compass in each dory. Although this custom has been growing in favor within the last ten years, yet probably not more than one-half of the dories belonging to Gloucester vessels are provided with this instrument, and the proportion in vessels from other ports is very much less. It seems culpable negligence on the part of the owners not to provide compasses for their crews, since the cost of an instrument sufficiently accurate to answer every purpose does not exceed $3. It is a fair question whether they should not be obliged by law to furnish such additional safeguards to prevent suffering and loss of life. It should be mentioned in this connection that where compasses are used they are in every instance furnished by the crews, and not by the owners of the vessels.* Fifty-two men were reported to have gone astray, from Gloucester vessels, in about two months, in the spring and early summer of 1883.

DANGERS FROM COLLISION.—There is danger, in foggy weather, of a dory being run down by steamers or passing vessels, though disaster can usually be avoided by cutting the trawl or anchor line. Dories are sometimes capsized by heavy seas when unloading their fish and gear alongside the vessel. The manner of setting trawls under sail is described in the chapter on the halibut fishery. This is the only method of setting trawls in the haddock winter fishery. As the vessel under sail approaches the dories to pick them up, there is a danger of the man at the wheel miscalculating the exact distance, and, striking the dory, of upsetting her. Many instances of this kind are recorded. Seine boats, with ten or twelve men on board, have been upset in this way, though loss of life has not been frequent as a result of such accidents.

DANGER OF THE UPSETTING OF SMALL BOATS WHEN UNDER SAIL.—This is a not uncommon cause of loss of life, not so much in the case of the Bank fishermen in their dories as in the shore fisheries, often carried on in sail boats by men who are reckless in their management.

* LOST IN THE FOG.—James Burke and Henry Fitzgerald, of schooner E. B. Phillips, from Le Have Bank, 14th, left their vessel at 4 p. m. New Year's day. A thick fog setting in, they were not able to regain her, and they rowed all night and the next day, when, at 6 o'clock, they were fortunate enough to get alongside schooner Tragabigzanda, where they got something to eat, and, taking a fresh start after getting rested, reached their own vessel at midnight, after having been absent thirty-six hours.—*Cape Ann Advertiser, January* 21, 1876.

DANGER FROM DRIFTING ICE.—*During the latter part of winter and in early spring the halibut* catchers on the Grand Bank and Banquereau are in danger of drifting ice, which may separate the dories from the vessels. In the spring of 1875 several dories got astray in this way, though they were afterwards picked up and the men were returned to their vessels or brought into port.

DANGERS OF BEING BLOWN OUT TO SEA.—The liability of fishermen, who are engaged in the shore fisheries in small boats or dories, to be blown off to sea by sudden and high winds is a danger to which this class are especially exposed. Instances of fatal results from this cause are not uncommon in most of the fishing communities, and narrow escapes from perilous positions have been frequently recorded. A mishap of this very kind is vividly described in Celia Thaxter's "Isles of Shoals":

"One of the most hideous experiences I ever heard befell a young Norwegian now living at the Shoals. He and a young companion came out from Portsmouth to set their trawl, in the winter fishing, two years ago. Before they reached the island, came a sudden squall of wind and snow, chilling and blinding. In a few moments they knew not where they were, and the wind continued to sweep them away. *Presently they found themselves under the lee of White Island Head; they threw* out the road-lines of their trawl, in desperate hope that they might hold the boat till the squall abated. The keepers at the light-house saw the poor fellows, but were powerless to help them. Alas! the road-lines soon broke, and the little boat was swept off again, they knew not whither. *Night came down upon them, tossed on that terrible black sea; the snow ceased, the clouds flew* before the deadly cold northwest wind; the thermometer sank below zero. One of the men died before morning; the other, alone with the dead man, was still driven on and on before the pitiless gale. *He had no cap nor mittens; had lost both.* He bailed the boat *incessantly, for the sea broke* over him the livelong time. He told me the story himself. He looked down at the awful face of his dead friend and thought 'how soon he should be like him'; but still he never ceased bailing—it was all he could do. Before night he passed Cape Cod and knew it as he rushed by. Another unspeakably awful night, and the gale abated no whit. Next morning he was almost gone from cold, fatigue, and hunger. His eyes were so swollen he could hardly see; but afar off, shining whiter than silver in the sun, the sails of a large schooner appeared at the edge of the fearful wilderness. He managed to hoist a bit of old canvas on an oar. He was then not far from Holmes' Hole, nearly two hundred miles from the Shoals! The schooner saw it and bore down for him, but the sea was running so high that he expected to be swamped every instant. As she swept past, they threw from the deck a rope with a loop at the end, tied with a bow-line knot that would not slip. It caught him over the head, and, clutching it at his throat with both hands, in an instant he found himself in the sea among the ice-cold, furious waves, drawn towards the vessel with all the strength of her crew. Just before he emerged he heard the captain shout, 'We've lost him!' Ah, *the bitter moment! For a horrible fear struck through him that they might lose their hold* an instant on the rope, and then he knew it would be all over. But they saved him. The boat, with the dead man in it all alone, went tossing, heaven knows where."

An early accident of this kind is recorded by a chronicler of colonial history:

"In January, 1641, a shallop, with eight men, would go from Piscataqua (though advised to the contrary), on the Lord's day, towards Pemaquid, but were by the northwest wind driven to sea for fourteen days; at length they reached Monhegin, and four of them in this time perished with the cold."

DANGER FROM DROWNING.—*In considering the various dangers to which the fishermen are* exposed by the upsetting of boats and by being thrown overboard, it is well to remember that the men have little chance of saving themselves by swimming, however expert they may be.

Overloaded, as they are, with thick clothing, rendered doubly heavy by saturation, they have comparatively very little use of their limbs, and, besides, the water is so cold that their muscles would soon become paralyzed. The majority of New England fishermen are completely ignorant of the art of swimming; in fact, the ability to swim is not considered by them to be of any special importance, as it scarcely increases their chances for safety. In talking with fishermen upon the subject they will refer to instances which have fallen under their observation of two men in a boat, one of whom could swim and the other could not. The former, trusting to his skill when the boat was capsized, attempted to swim to a place of safety and was drowned, while the other, clinging to the boat, was rescued unharmed.

PRECAUTIONS, ACTUAL OR POSSIBLE, FOR THE SAFETY OF LIFE.—Strange to say, there are rarely any provisions on our fishing fleet for the succor of those who are overturned into the water. If fishing vessels, like merchant and other vessels, could be compelled by law to carry life-buoys or preservers, many lives might yearly be saved. This law might be enforced much in the same way as has already been suggested for the provision of life-ropes and catables upon the fishing dories. A small outlay by the owners of the fishing vessels to provide such simple safety apparatus as would be needed by a vessel and its crew of twelve or fifteen men, would yield results of immense importance in the way of preserving valuable lives.

DANGERS OF SALMON-FISHING IN THE COLUMBIA RIVER.—As the salmon have become less abundant up the river, the men go farther down, and now the best fishing is found near the bar at the river's mouth, where the breakers are very dangerous, especially in the spring.

Many of the fishermen are drunk or asleep in the bottom of the boat when it nears the bar, and hence lose their lives. Often, too, sober and skillful men take dangerous risks for the sake of a good catch. Sometimes miscalculations as to wind and tide result in the boats being driven into the breakers, where they are swamped at once.

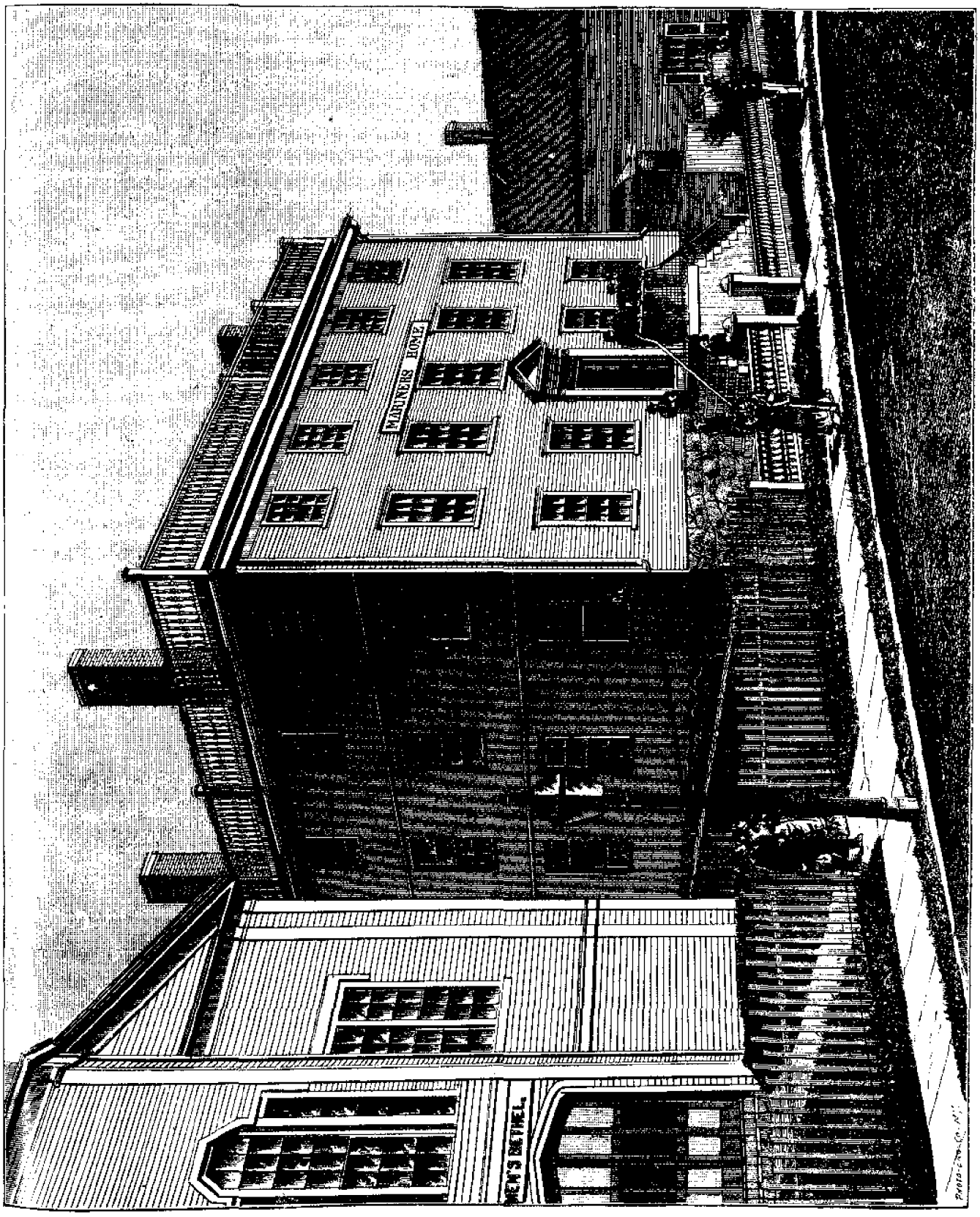
In stormy weather, for various reasons, some men are drowned almost every night. In 1879 about forty men were drowned, and more than that number in April and May of 1880. Little outside notice is taken of these accidents. Most of the fishermen are foreigners, without family or friends, and, unless their bodies are taken in gill-nets, when drowned they drift out to sea and the boat is reported as missing.

DANGERS TO WHALEMEN AND SEALERS.—The whaleboats sent out from the vessels to kill and secure the whales are often struck by the whale's flukes, and many whalemen have lost their lives at such times. Sometimes the men are caught by a foul line and being carried overboard are drowned. Men engaged in the fur-seal and sea-elephant fisheries have lost their lives by the capsizing of the boats while making a landing on the rocky shores of the seal islands. In the description of the whale and seal fisheries, in another section of this report, numerous instances of these and other dangers to whalemen and sealers are more fully discussed.

51. PROVISION FOR THE BEREAVED FAMILIES OF FISHERMEN.

The nature and extent of the disasters to which our fishermen are constantly exposed having been considered, it is of interest to know what systematic efforts are made for the relief of their families when, as is usually the case, they are left without adequate means of support.

Private benevolence and the organized charity of the different religious denominations have been found sufficient for the needs in this respect of many of the smaller fishing communities. In the larger ports private charity is very extensively practiced, notwithstanding the existence of various charitable organizations.



Seamen's Bethel and Mariner's Home at New Bedford, Mass.

From a photograph by U. S. Fish Commission.

In Gloucester, subscription lists are often circulated, musical and literary entertainments are given, and benefit balls are organized by the friends of impoverished families.*

On the occasion of extensive disasters, such as occurred in 1862 and 1879, large subscriptions have been made both in Gloucester and in other cities. The contributions through various sources for the relief of sufferers at Gloucester after the great losses of February, 1879, amounted to about $30,000.

Many fishermen belong to such organizations as the Masonic fraternity, the Odd-Fellows, and the Knights of Pythias; and in some communities the systems of assurance and mutual help thus provided are called into much activity. A large percentage of the native-born fishermen are probably Freemasons. In Gloucester there are two lodges of Freemasons, and in Provincetown, at Boothbay, Me., and at other ports on the coast of Maine this organization is large and influential.

There is no doubt that if the town records of the early days were searched many instances might be found of especial provisions for individual cases like that in the law here quoted, which, though not directly to the point, illustrates the usage of the colonies in the seventeenth century:

"Att the Generall Court of his Ma^tie held att Plymouth, on the 4^th of October, 1675.

"This court, being informed of the low condition of Apthya, the relict of John Knowles, of Eastham, whoe was lately slayne in the collonies seruice, towards the releiffe and support of the said widdow and her children, haue ordered to receiue ten pounds out of the proffitts of the fishing att Cape Codd, wherof fiue pounds to be payed to her this yeer, and the other fiue the next yeer."†

One of the earliest instances of public aid to fishermen's families, of which record has been found, was in 1771, when the provincial government of Massachusetts placed in the hands of a committee the sum of £118 for distribution among the families left destitute by the destruction of twenty-nine vessels in a storm on the Grand Bank.

Charitable societies have been organized at various times and places. Such was the Marine Society of Newburyport, which had, in 1861, funds to the amount of $26,000, mostly the contributions and legacies of sea captains. Among its beneficiaries at that time were said to be some of the most respectable people of Newburyport, superannuated seamen, widows, and children. The fishing interests of this town have of late declined to such an extent that there is no need of such a society except to continue its past benefactions.

Wellfleet, in its days of importance as a fishing port, supported a charitable organization called "Wellfleet Marine Benevolent Society." In 1861 this society had a reserve fund of $3,000.‡

At Portland, Me., there are no organizations to provide for the fishermen's widows and orphans, but the masters of merchant vessels are cared for by the Marine Charitable Society. The comparatively rare cases of destitution among fishermen here, as in many other fishing ports, are provided for by the town poor laws.

In some of the largest fishing ports, such as Gloucester, where the frequent recurrence of disasters is so extensive as to be practically beyond the reach of individual or extemporaneous efforts for relief, charitable societies have been organized, but we cannot learn that any are now particularly active outside of Gloucester.

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* A MERITORIOUS ACT.—Capt. Ezekiel Call, who was lost in the schooner William Murray during the severe gale of April 2, 1871, left a widow and five small children. Soon after his loss she was presented with a house-lot at Riverdale, and her relatives and friends signified their intention of building a house thereon and making her a present of it. The money for the lumber was raised by subscription, the cellar dug and stoned by willing hands; then followed the carpentry work, painting, &c., all done by volunteers. The house was ready for occupancy in the spring of 1873, and the thanks of the widow and the fatherless will descend as a benediction upon the hearts of those who assisted in its erection either by money or labor.—*Cape Ann Advertiser*, 1873.

†Plymouth Colony Records, Vol. V, 1668–1678, p. 177.

‡Provincetown Advocate, Jan. 25, 1871.—"A notice of the annual meeting in the Methodist church Jan. 17."

The most important and most efficient of these is the Gloucester Fishermen's and Seamen's Widows and Orphans Aid Society. This was first organized in March, 1862, as the Widows and Orphans Fund Society, and since that date the yearly collections have been as follows: 1862, $18,544; 1863, $155; 1864, $7,500; 1865, $4,601; 1866, $4,913; 1867, $3,546; 1868, $4,556; 1869, $4,897; 1870, $4,420; 1871, $4,020; 1872, $4,220; 1873, $5,485; 1874, $5,192; 1875, $5,120; 1876, $4,605; 1877, $4,860; 1878, $3,252; 1879, $18,559; 1880, $3,550; 1881, $3,900. Total receipts to 1881, $115,895. Funds held by the society (invested) at close of season, 1881, $20,500. Total expenditure in nineteen years, $95,395.

In 1862 the money was raised by public subscription. The terrible gales in January and February of that year resulted in a loss to Gloucester of twenty vessels and one hundred and forty men, leaving seventy-five widows and one hundred and sixty fatherless children needing aid. A meeting of the citizens was held in the Town Hall and a committee appointed to distribute circulars stating the facts and calling for subscriptions. In response to this call money was received from various parts of the country, a generous citizen of Salem contributing $500; in other cities and towns upwards of $10,000 was raised; and the people of Gloucester contributed more than $5,000. About $8,000 of the receipts of the society that year were disbursed for the immediate relief of sufferers, and the balance held as a fund for future needs.

The following year, 1863, efforts were made to induce fishermen to join the society, and certificates were issued at $1 each which entitled their families to receive benefit in case the one paying for the certificate should be lost. Owing to the superstitious of the fishermen this plan was not very successful, only about one hundred and fifty of them being induced to buy the certificates. In March, 1865, the society was reorganized under its present name, and established on a permanent basis. An attempt was made at this time to induce the fishermen to become life members by the payment of $10 each, but this plan met with no greater favor than selling certificates.

The most successful plan for raising money, and the one still in force, was first attempted in 1864. By this method an assessment of ½ of 1 per cent. is made on the earnings of the fishermen. This amount is deducted from the fisherman's share at the settling up of each trip, and the total collections of the season are handed over to the society by the fishing firms at the end of each year. Additional amounts are received from private contributions. The large collections of 1879 were very largely from outside sources. Several other aid societies were organized in that year, and their total collections reached nearly $30,000. From $5,000 to $6,000 are now annually disbursed by the Widows and Orphans Aid Society, a widow with three or four children receiving $50, and smaller families about $30. Besides allowances of money, clothing and fuel to the amount of $75 to $125 per family are distributed. The number of families receiving aid in 1874 was 120; in 1875, 135; in 1876, 136; in 1877, 157; in 1878, 134; in 1879, 208; in 1880, 193.

The financial report of this society for 1879 shows contributions from abroad amounting to $14,353.83; by legacy, $437.25; from fishing firms and other Gloucester subscribers for 1879, $2,705.07; from interest, back subscriptions, and other sources, $2,397.78; total receipts, $19,893.93. The amount paid out in cash allowances was $5,351.53; for fuel, $1,082.35; for clothing and shoes, $378.41; provisions, $664.79; aid to Rockport families, $325; paid balance due treasurer, $965.80; expenses, $310.77; invested, $9,000; cash on hand, $1,815.28; total, $19,893.93. The number of families assisted was 208, of which number 109 were added during the year. There were 22 packages of clothing received and 860 garments distributed during the year.

The annual report for 1880 shows receipts—from a friend, $500; from fishing firms for 1880, $1,771.85; from back subscriptions, interest and other sources, $4,675.96; total receipts, including cash on hand ($1,815.28) at beginning of year, $8,763.09. The disbursements were—in allowances

of cash, $5,623.09; in fuel, $1,165.24; provisions, $213.06; clothing and shoes, $258.12; amount loaned, $500; paid for books, printing, &c., $17.42; for treasurer and collector, $250; cash on hand, $736.16. The number of families receiving assistance during the year was 193, and the number taken off the list during the year was 38.

Gloucester has three other charitable societies, one of which, the Tenement Association for Widows and Orphans, was organized in 1871. Its object is "to furnish, at moderate rate, homes for the widows of our lost fishermen." It has erected, at a cost of $7,500, a building containing ten tenements. This is a neat structure in the western part of the city, on "The Meadows." It was, unfortunately, not built in a sufficiently central location and has not fully served the purpose for which it was intended. The poor women are obliged to work for their living and this tenement is too remote from the busy part of the town.

The Gloucester Female Charitable Association was organized in 1834, for the purpose of assisting the poor. Its funds are derived from annual memberships and donations. In 1875 it aided 126 families, most of which were those of fishermen. The financial report of this society for the year 1879 shows receipts from contributions, $4,182.02; from assessments, interest, &c., $254.50; cash on hand at beginning of year, $36.27; total, $4,472.79. The disbursements for the same year were as follows: For groceries, $601.05; for dry goods, $307.53; for shoes, $541.50; for fuel, stoves, meat, milk, &c., $499.03; invested, $2,500; cash on hand, $23.68; total, $4,472.79. The number of garments distributed for the year was 1,145.

The Gloucester Relief Association was organized in 1877 for the relief of the deserving poor of that city. It had no accumulated fund, but depended upon voluntary contributions of the benevolent to meet the pressing demands constantly made upon its charity. It has no salaried officers. After the disastrous gale of February 20, 1879, the association made an appeal to its earlier beneficiaries and to the charitable public for the relief of the 53 widows and 149 children thus left dependent upon charity. The appeal was nobly responded to, the amount collected being $6,846.04. Of this amount $6,496.37 was distributed to the needy, and the balance in the treasurer's hands in March, 1881, was $349.67. Besides the contributions of money, the association received large quantities of clothing and provisions, which were given to the families of the fishermen. It is intended to make the association a permanent one, as there is constant need of its kindly services.

Apart from the organized charitable associations, much good work is done at Gloucester in a more private way. What is known as the Cape Ann Advertiser Fund was contributed by subscribers of that paper for the relief of sufferers by the gales of February and March, 1879. This fund amounted to $671.59 and was the means of doing much good. At the same period the Boston Theater Company sent a generous donation of money to Gloucester, which was disbursed by the mayor, assisted by citizens. Collections have been taken in Gloucester churches from time to time for the relief of suffering families of lost fishermen, and donations are frequently received by Gloucester ministers from benevolent persons in other places.